

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Amendments to the claims are reflected below in the **Listing of Claims**, which replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this application.

Listing of Claims

1-147. (Canceled).

148. (New) A computer-implemented method, comprising reporting matches to searches initiated by a searcher so long as access control criteria are met, the matches including potential targets satisfying one or more search criteria defined for the searches, and the access control criteria (i) being selectably controllable by any of one or more persons in one or more chains of person-to-person relationships connecting the searcher and the potential targets, and (ii) defining attributes of such one or more persons and such persons' contacts that may be shared with others.

149. (New) The computer-implemented method of claim 148, wherein one attribute defined by the access control criteria establishes connection strengths for person-to-person relationships and wherein said search criteria defines a minimum connection strength for a person-to-person relationship that is required between persons forming said one or more chains of person-to-person relationships connecting the searcher and the potential targets.

150. (New) The computer-implemented method of claim 148, wherein at least one attribute defined by the access control criteria comprises an indication of a connection strength for at least one of the person-to-person relationships between persons forming said one or more chains of person-to-person relationships.

151. (New) The computer-implemented method of claim 148, wherein the search criteria include a connection threshold specified by the searcher, the connection threshold indicating a maximum number of person-to-person relationships to be allowed in establishing said one or more chains of person-to-person relationships connecting the searcher and the potential targets.

152. (New) The computer-implemented method of claim 148, wherein the access control criteria comprise a connection threshold indicating a maximum number of person-to-person relationships to be allowed in establishing said one or more chains of person-to-person relationships.

153. (New) The computer-implemented method of claim 148, wherein one attribute defined by the access control criteria establishes whether personal communication between the searcher and a corresponding connecting individual is required prior to direct contact between the searcher and the target.

154. (New) The computer-implemented method of claim 148, wherein the access control criteria comprise hierarchical security levels for personal information.

155. (New) The computer-implemented method of claim 148, wherein the matches are reported only so long as a connection between each person associated with said one or more person-to-person relationships connecting the searcher and the potential targets satisfies one attribute of the access control criteria established by a next subsequent connector in a connection path between the searcher and the potential target.

156. (New) The computer-implemented method of claim 148, wherein reporting matches to searches initiated by a searcher so long as access control criteria are met further comprises autonomously brokering connections between the searcher and the potential target so as to provide information regarding the

one or more persons in the one or more chains of person-to-person relationships connecting the searcher and the potential targets.

157. (New) The computer-implemented method of claim 156, wherein autonomously brokering connections between the searcher and the potential target further comprises autonomously determining whether or not a connecting individual in an inter-personal connection path from the searcher to the target is a member of a group to which a succeeding connector in the path has granted access to the succeeding connector's contact information.

158. (New) The computer-implemented method of claim 156, wherein autonomously brokering connections between the searcher and the potential target further comprises brokering, in accordance with one or more instructions supplied by any one or more connecting individuals in an inter-personal connection path from the searcher to a potential target, where such instructions refer to attributes of relationships between any two or more said persons in said chains.

159. (New) The computer-implemented method of claim 158, wherein said attributes of relationships include one or more of the following: levels of trust, levels of access, levels of privacy, levels of security, length of relationship, frequency of interaction, closeness of relationship, nature of relationship.

160. (New) The computer-implemented method of claim 148, wherein attributes of such one or more persons include access control provisions of organizations to which such persons belong.

161. (New) The computer-implemented method of claim 148, wherein one attribute of the access control criteria determines whether a third party evaluation report is accessible to the searcher, said third party evaluation report (i) pertaining to a person forming a person-to-person relationship connecting the

searcher and the potential target, and (ii) being integrated with a personal profile of said person forming a person-to-person relationship connecting the searcher and the potential target.

162. (New) The computer-implemented method of claim 161, wherein said third party evaluation report is not accessible to said person forming a person-to-person relationship connecting the searcher and the potential target.

163. (New) The computer-implemented method of claim 148, wherein a potential target comprises an individual who has previously made a request for the searcher's attention.

164. (New) A computer-implemented method, comprising reporting matches to search criteria specified in a search initiated by a searcher so long as the number of person-to-person connections in a chain of person-to-person connections connecting the searcher and a potential target is within a specified connection threshold, the specified connection threshold indicating a maximum number of person-to-person connections to be allowed in establishing said chain of person-to-person connections connecting the searcher and the potential target.

165. (New) The computer-implemented method of claim 164, wherein the specified connection threshold is specified in the search criteria by the searcher.

166. (New) The computer-implemented method of claim 164, wherein the specified connection threshold is established by the potential target.

167. (New) The computer-implemented method of claim 164, wherein the specified connection threshold is established by each person in said chain of person-to-person connections connecting the searcher and the potential target.

168. (New) The computer-implemented method of claim 164, wherein some or all of the matches are not reported unless permission for said reporting is

granted by one or more owners of profiles in a chain of person-to-person connections connecting the searcher and the potential target to which the match pertains.

169. (New) The computer-implemented method of claim 164, wherein the matches are searched for according to degrees of trust between contacts specified through user profile criteria.

170. (New) The computer-implemented method of claim 164, wherein reporting matches includes reporting information regarding individuals represented by the matches according to access control instructions provided by those individuals concerning levels of details of their personal information which may be revealed to others.

171. (New) The computer-implemented method of claim 164, wherein reporting matches includes providing a third-party evaluation of the potential target, said third-party evaluation integrated with a personal profile of the potential target.

172. (New) A computer-implemented method, comprising reporting matches to search criteria specified in a search initiated by a searcher so long as a connection strength between each two people forming a person-to-person connection in a chain of person-to-person connections between the searcher and a potential target exceeds a connection strength threshold, said connection strength being an attribute of access control criteria that are selectably controllable by any of one or more persons in said chain of person-to-person connections between the searcher and the potential target.

173. (New) The computer-implemented method of claim 172, wherein the connection strength threshold is included in the search criteria specified by the searcher.

174. (New) The computer-implemented method of claim 172, wherein the connection strength threshold is established by the potential target.

175. (New) The computer-implemented method of claim 172, wherein the connection strength threshold determines the minimum connection strength required between two people forming a person-to-person connection in a chain of person-to-person connections between the searcher and the potential target.